

# Notices

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Friday, March 31, 1995

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

#### Committee of Nine; Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act of October 6, 1972, (Public Law 92-463, 86 Stat. 770-776), the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service announces the following meeting:

*Name:* Committee of Nine.

*Date and Time:* May 9, 1995, 1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.; May 10, 1995, 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.; May 11, 1995, 8:30 a.m.—Noon.

*Place:* USDA, CSREES, 14th & Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3854 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250.

*Type of Meeting:* Open to the public. Persons may participate in the meeting as time and space permit.

*Comments:* The public may file written comments before or after the meeting with the contact person listed below.

*Purpose:* To evaluate and recommend proposals for cooperative research on problems that concern agriculture in two or more States, and to make recommendations for allocation of regional research funds appropriated by Congress under the Hatch Act for research at the State Agricultural Experiment Stations.

*Contact person for Agenda and more information:* Dr. Walter R. Woods, Executive Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, 14th & Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3341, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone: 202-720-4088.

Done at Washington, D.C., this 21st day of March 1995.

**William D. Carlson,**

*Acting Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*  
[FR Doc. 95-7963 Filed 3-30-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-M

## Forest Service

### Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to Amend the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Toiyabe National Forest Spring Mountains National Recreation Area

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Preparation of a general management plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation area as an amendment to the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan); Toiyabe National Forest; Spring Mountains National Recreation Area; Clark and Nye Counties, Nevada.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Act (P.L. 103-63) and 36 CFR 219.10(f), the Forest Supervisor for the Toiyabe National Forest gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the decision to prepare a general management plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA) as an amendment to the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Toiyabe National Forest. This amendment would make specific changes in the Forest Plan, as it applies to the SMNRA. This notice includes a summary of the proposed changes to the Forest Plan, a description of the need for these changes, and a brief description of preliminary issues and potential alternatives to the proposed amendment. This notice also provides estimated dates for filing the draft and final EIS; information on future public involvement; the name and address of the responsible official; and the name of the person who can provide additional information.

**DECISION TO BE MADE:** The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area is currently managed under three separate land management plans, developed independently by different agencies under different authorities and legislation. One of these is the Forest Plan, which also provides direction for the rest of the 4.5 million acre Toiyabe National Forest. Public Law 103-63 directs the Forest Service to "develop a general management plan for the Recreation Area as an amendment to the

Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan."

In January, 1995, the Forest Service released the Analysis of the Management Situation for the SMNRA. This document reviews the best available information on the ecosystems and users of the Spring Mountains, and identifies the need for change in current management direction. Through the process of environmental analysis, the Forest Service will decide whether or not to amend the Forest Plan to address needs for change identified in the Analysis of the Management Situation. Changes are needed to:

- Meet the direction established in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Act;
- Improve ecosystem health and sustainability by protecting riparian areas, biodiversity hotspots, habitat for threatened, endangered, and candidate species, and soil and water quality;
- Establish standards and guidelines to protect heritage resources, wilderness characteristics, scenic values, and other resources affecting the public use and enjoyment of the land;
- Respond to population growth and development in Las Vegas and southern Nevada, and changes in public sentiment regarding management of the Spring Mountains;
- Identify opportunities for sustainable recreational use and development;
- Provide management direction for lands transferred to the Forest Service under the Nevada Enhancement Act of 1988;
- Establish ecosystem management as the organizing philosophy for management of the SMNRA;
- Identify goals, objectives, and desired future conditions for each ecological unit of the SMNRA;
- Respond to changes in law and direction in the eight years since the Forest Plan was approved; and
- Establish a program of monitoring and evaluation to support adaptive management of the SMNRA.

The proposed amendment would not make any changes in Forest-wide direction, or in management of other portions of the Toiyabe National Forest. No irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources (site-specific actions) will be made as a result of this decision. The Forest Plan is a programmatic document; projects to

implement it will involve site-specific environmental analysis and appropriate documentation.

**DATES:** The agency expects to file the draft EIS (DEIS) with the Environmental Protection Agency and make it available for public comment by November, 1995. The agency expects to file the final EIS by July, 1996.

**MEETINGS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:** Based on public recommendations, scientific analysis, and the Analysis of the Management Situation, the Toiyabe National Forest has prepared a proposed amendment to the Forest Plan for consideration. The Forest Service invites comments and suggestions from Federal, State and local agencies, American Indian tribes, individuals, and organizations on issues concerning the effects of this proposal. The agency has scheduled public meetings to present and discuss the proposed Forest Plan amendment at:

- Monday, April 10, 7:30 pm, Public Library, Mt. Charleston, NV.
- Tuesday, April 18, 7:00 pm, Chamber of Commerce, Pahrump, NV.
- Tuesday, April 25, 6:00 pm, Cashman Field mtg rms, Las Vegas, NV.
- Date to be arranged, Fire Station, Mountain Springs, NV.

The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the proposed changes to the Forest Plan and to identify issues associated with those changes. Written comments are encouraged. Additional meetings with individuals or groups will be arranged by request.

The Forest has an extensive public mailing list of interested and affected people, developed during preparation of the Analysis of the Management Situation, with additions based on participation at each meeting. The Forest Service will continue to contact everyone on the mailing list at each stage of the planning process to provide information and solicit input. Those interested in being added to the mailing list should call or write to the address below.

In addition, the Forest has continuing contact with federal, state and local agencies such as the Nevada Division of Wildlife, the Nevada Division of State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Clark County Planning Commission, and Congressional representatives. These agencies, governments and contacts will continue to be part of the planning effort.

Additional public meetings will be scheduled in June to develop a wide range of alternatives to the Proposed Amendment which address the needs

identified in the Analysis of the Management Situation, and respond to the significant issues.

Comments will be of most use to the planning team if received before August, 1995. Refer to the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in this notice for the contact individual.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jerry Ingersoll, Planning Team Leader, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, 2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16, Las Vegas, NV 89102. (702) 873-8800.

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** The Forest Supervisor for the Toiyabe National Forest, located at 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, NV 89431, is the Responsible Official and deciding official for this action. The Forest Supervisor may delegate this responsibility to an Assistant Forest Supervisor in Las Vegas.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Forest planning is a dynamic process that builds upon new information and conditions developed since adoption of a Forest Plan. Forest Plans may be amended as needed. The adoption of a Forest Plan sets key decisions for the long-term management of a National Forest. These decisions can be described as:

- Establishment of forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11(b));
- Establishment of forest-wide management requirements, or standards and guidelines (36 CFR 219.13);
- Establishment of management area direction (prescriptions and associated standards and guidelines) applying to each specific management area (36 CFR 219.11(c));
- Designation of lands suited or not suited for timber production and other resource management activities (36 CFR 219.14, 219.15, 219.20 and 219.21);
- Establishment of monitoring and evaluation requirements (36 CFR 219.11(d)); and
- Recommendations to Congress for the establishment of Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Research Natural Areas, and other special designations, as appropriate.

This proposed Forest Plan amendment is limited in scope. Changes are proposed in management area direction, suitability for resource management, monitoring, and recommendations for special designations for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (less than 10% of the land area of the Toiyabe National Forest). The proposed amendment would make no changes in forest-wide

goals or standards, or in management direction for any other lands on the Toiyabe National Forest.

The amendment process began with the development of an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (36 CFR 219.12(e)), which was distributed on January 17, 1995. The AMS:

- reflects the results of scientific inventories and surveys;
- compiles public sentiment and suggestions;
- summarizes relevant law, regulation, and policy; and
- identifies the need for change in current management.

The AMS brings together the best available scientific information to document the conditions and trends of ecosystems and human uses in the Spring Mountains. The public was involved in identifying the need for changes to the Forest Plan, and many groups worked closely with the planning team to develop the AMS. Between May, 1994, and January, 1995, the Forest Service held eight open houses and public meetings, made more than sixty presentations to groups and individuals, and solicited ideas from more than 600 people. Copies of the AMS may be obtained by contacting the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** contact identified previously.

Based upon the needs for change identified in the AMS, the Forest Service is proposing specific changes to the long-term management direction for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The public is invited to comment on the proposed changes and to identify alternatives to the proposal which address the needs identified in the AMS.

#### Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to provide new management direction for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, one of five districts on the Toiyabe National Forest. The proposal would:

- designate two new management areas and realign one more to encompass lands acquired through the Enhancement Act;
- unify management direction for the SMNRA under a single management plan;
- provide new management prescriptions for the SMNRA, including goals, objectives, desired future condition, standards, and guidelines for each of the four management areas involved;
- expand the Carpenter Canyon Research Natural Area to provide

- additional protection for the unique resources of Carpenter Canyon;
- establish a program of monitoring and evaluation specific to the SMNRA; and
- identify opportunities for sustainable recreational use and development.

The full text of the Proposed Amendment to the Forest Plan is being distributed to the Forest Service's mailing list of potentially interested and affected parties. Copies are available upon request from the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Planning Team. See **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above.

This proposal represents a starting point for discussion; the Forest Service will consider all reasonable alternatives to the proposed Forest Plan amendment, including no action (leaving management direction as it is). Public comment on this proposal will be used to develop alternatives to the proposed action. The responsible official may select any alternative developed through this process as the management plan for the SMNRA; the proposed amendment will not necessarily be the preferred alternative.

#### **Purpose and Need/Amendment Topics**

Not every issue related to Forest Service management is best addressed through the Forest Plan. Public comment, monitoring of current activities, and direction from the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Act led to the identification of many topics which might lend themselves to Forest Service action. These topics were categorized as follows:

- Amendment Topics
- Implementation Topics
- Topics outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service
- Administrative Topics
- Research Topics

Amendment topics are identified and discussed below. Only those topics which fall into this category are addressed in the proposed Forest Plan amendment.

Implementation topics are those where the existing Forest Plan is adequate, but there have been problems with implementation of the Plan. One example is use of motor vehicles in the Mr. Charleston Wilderness. Motor vehicles are clearly prohibited in the Wilderness by the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Nevada Wilderness Act, and the Forest Plan. Nevertheless, some use continues to occur, especially at Trough Spring and Wallace Canyon, where old roads cross the Wilderness boundary. This problem is being addressed through placement of barriers (boulders,

earth mounds) in road beds, and increased law enforcement.

Topics outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service include those where the Forest Service does not have authority to act. These topics include issues involving private land or land under the management of other federal agencies (such as the BLM). Some people in the Mt. Charleston area, for example, are concerned over development of additional lots in Kyle Canyon. This is a proper subject for Clark County, but not for the Forest Service, which has no jurisdiction over private land.

Administrative topics are those which relate to budget, personnel, or administrative procedures, rather than land management. These are topics which can be addressed through the Forest Service directives system, and which do not generally require environmental analysis. Examples in this category include fees charged by the Forest Service for campground reservations, group events, and other special land uses. The Forest Service sets these fees through administrative direction, in accordance with existing law and regulation.

Research topics are those where additional information, through research, is needed. Once research topics are identified, they can be investigated by the Forest Service's Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, or by public or private universities. One example is the need to learn more about the ecology of the blackbrush community and its successional pathways.

Amendment topics are those subjects which can best be resolved by amending the Forest Plan. These are also known as "public issues, management concerns, and resource use and development opportunities" (36 CFR 219.12(b)). Through work with interested publics, the Planning Team identified the following fifteen amendment topics in the *Analysis of the Management Situation*.

- **FOREST HEALTH/BIODIVERSITY**—The Spring Mountains provide a unique and fragile ecosystem—an island in the desert—which harbors many endemic species of plants and animals. As we have learned more about ecosystem dynamics, and as Las Vegas has grown, we have become increasingly aware of potential conflicts. The proposed amendment includes goals, objectives, and standards to assure protection of ecological health and diversity while providing for sustainable recreation use and development.

- **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES**—The Spring Mountains provide habitat for four listed threatened and endangered species, one species proposed for listing, and 54 candidate species, including 22 which occur nowhere else in the world. Proposed standards to protect these species are needed to provide for recovery of listed species, and to keep candidate species from becoming threatened or endangered. The proposed amendment would include a conservation agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which could provide a basis for determinations not to list some candidate species.
- **WILDLIFE HABITAT**—Wildlife of the SMNRA includes native species ranging from mule deer and desert bighorn sheep to Palmers chipmunk and chuckwalla. Several game species have also been introduced to the range, including elk, chukar, and turkey. Wildlife populations are managed by the Nevada Division of Wildlife. Forest Plan direction is needed, however, to establish habitat management objectives, and to set an appropriate balance between native and non-native species. Proposed objectives, including Appropriate Management Levels (AML's) for elk, are needed in order to provide direction for habitat management, and for improvements such as water development.
- **WILD HORSES AND BURROS**—Wild horses and burros on the SMNRA are managed by the Forest Service under the authority of the Wild Horses and Burros Protection Act of 1971. Like elk, wild horses and burros have been introduced to the Spring Mountains, and are maintained there to provide for public enjoyment. In some areas of the SMNRA, wild horse populations have increased to the point where riparian and spring sites are affected; in other areas, forage is so limiting that animal condition is poor. Proposed objectives, including Appropriate Management Levels (AML's) are needed in order to provide direction for management of habitat and populations, and for improvements such as water development.
- **ARCHAEOLOGY**—Many places in the AMNRA have been used by people for thousands of years. Often, these people have left behind evidence of their use of the land, including American Indian rock art and

roasting pits, historic cabins and sawmills, and a section of the Spanish Trail/Mormon Road. These artifacts and sites offer us a glimpse of our history and culture, and provide a window on the dynamics and use of the ecosystem. Proposed management direction is needed to protect these resources while also allowing for appropriate interpretation and enjoyment.

- **RECREATION AND**

**ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES**—All of the developed recreation facilities in the SMNRA are located within the old "Developed Canyons" management area—15,500 acres in Kyle Canyon, Lee Canyon, and Deer Creek. Most of the fire and administrative facilities of the SMNRA are in these same canyons. In Cold Creek, heavy recreation use occurs with very limited service, facilities, or management. Many people have suggested dispersing recreation use and facilities over a wider area; the Nevada Division of State Parks commissioned a 1991 study which identified suitable areas for cooperative development of state park facilities. The Proposed Amendment includes determinations of suitability for recreation development, as well as standards and guidelines for development and management of recreation and administrative facilities.

- **WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE**—The SMNRA, and particularly the developed canyons of the east slope, are heavily influenced by urban development centered in Las Vegas. Four small communities are located within the boundaries of the SMNRA, and further subdivision and development on private land is likely. Semi-urban areas surrounded by National Forest System lands often present such issues as fire suppression and conflict with recreation users. Standards are proposed to address fire prevention and suppression, scenic quality, water quality degradation, and loss of wildlife habitat in and around the wildland/urban interface.

- **SCENIC QUALITY**—One of the principal resources of the SMNRA, and one of the main reasons for its popularity, is the unique quality of the area's scenery. Cliffs, towering ponderosa pines, ancient bristlecones, meadows, and snow-covered peaks all form part of the attraction of the Spring Mountains to visitors. proposed visual quality

objectives are needed in order to establish standards for management activities which might affect scenic quality.

- **WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT**—The 43,000 acre Mt. Charleston Wilderness forms the core of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, and includes the highest peaks in the range. The Wilderness also includes most of the bristlecone pine forests, and many species of rare plants and butterflies. Proposed standards and guidelines for recreational use of Wilderness are needed to protect these fragile resources.

- **RECREATION MANAGEMENT**—In addition to camping and picnicking at developed recreation sites, many people enjoy the SMNRA as a place for sightseeing, horseback riding, mountain biking, off-highway vehicle use, rock climbing, cave exploration, hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, and group outings. As the population of southern Nevada grows, these uses can cause damage to natural and cultural features, and sometimes conflict a bit. Proposed standards are needed to provide direction for management of these uses in a sustainable manner, within the capacity of the land.

- **TRAILS**—Of approximately 50 miles of designated trails in the SMNRA, less than 7 miles are outside the Mt. Charleston Wilderness. Trail riding opportunities for mountain bikes and off-highway vehicles (which are excluded from the Wilderness), and for equestrians are limited. The Spring Mountains offer a great deal of potentially suitable terrain for multiple-use trails, including opportunities for development of regional trail networks. Proposed goals and standards for trail development are needed to suggest appropriate locations and management for trails.

- **MONITORING AND RESEARCH**—During preparation of the Analysis of the Management Situation, the Forest Service recognized many fields in which information to predict environmental effects is limited. As the Spring Mountains receive unprecedented levels of use, how will ecosystem health and function be affected? If we continue to suppress fires, how will vegetation and wildlife habitat change? How is increasing recreational use affecting historic and prehistoric sites? Our inventories have often left us with more questions than they have

answered. The proposed program of monitoring and research is needed to assess the impacts of the management courses we choose, and to permit us to change course if needed.

- **LAND ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL**—The boundaries of the SMNRA include 315,648 acres of national forest system land, and 7,171 acres of private land. The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Act directs the Forest Service to prepare "an inventory of all lands within the Recreation Act not presently managed as National Forest lands that will permit the Secretary to evaluate possible future acquisitions." Land purchases and exchanges are carried out on an equal value basis with willing buyers and sellers. Proposed direction for land adjustment is needed to identify which private parcels are suitable for acquisition, and which national forest parcels, if any, are available for disposal.

- **FIRE MANAGEMENT**—With increased subdivision and development of private land within the SMNRA boundaries, management of wildfires assumes importance beyond simply the protection of national forest resources. At the same time, successful fire suppression can often lead to dangerous buildups of fuels, and may result in unwanted changes in vegetation and wildlife habitat. Proposed direction for fire suppression, controlled burning, and fuel reduction is needed in order to retain the historic role of fire in the ecosystem while protecting lives, property, and natural resources.

- **PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**—From time to time, the Forest Service receives requests for private, commercial developments or uses of national forest system land. These may include electronic sites and public utilities, outfitter/guide uses, competitive trail rides and other group activities, and even substantial commercial developments. The Lee Canyon ski area, the electronic sites on Angel Peak and Mt. Potosi, and several organizational camps are among the most visible examples of such uses. Proposed standards for special uses are needed to assist Forest Service managers in identifying which uses are appropriate.

The Forest Service prepared the proposed action as a starting point for analysis and scoping. The proposed action is one way to respond to the need for change—to the above amendment topics. The Forest Service will use public comment on the proposal to identify significant issues, and to develop to wide range of alternative solutions to address these needs.

### Preliminary Issues

Through initial scoping, the Forest Service has identified the following issues relating to the effects of the proposed Forest Plan amendment. These are preliminary issues—additional scoping and public involvement will be used to refine and add to this list to develop a complete understanding of all significant issues related to this proposal.

- UNCERTAIN EFFECTS TO SENSITIVE SPECIES—For many rare species of plants and animals, current research and inventories are not sufficient to identify whether existing uses or alterations to the ecosystem pose a threat to their existence. While we can sometimes identify “biodiversity hotspots,” we do not completely understand the critical factors necessary to ensure their protection. Scientists and others are concerned that introduced species (including wild horses and burros), rock climbing, and proposed expansion of recreational facilities and trails, especially in Kyle and Lee Canyons and the Wilderness, may affect rare plants and animals in ways which we do not fully understand.
- LIMITS TO RECREATIONAL USE—The proposal would limit some opportunities for recreational use of the Spring Mountains. Proposed restrictions on equestrian use above timberline, rock climbing in the Wilderness, expansion of the ski area and other commercial developments, closure of the Carpenter Canyon road, and restrictions on development of recreation facilities are, in some peoples’ minds, contrary to the spirit of a national recreation area. Some people are concerned that the proposed limits on recreational activities go too far, unnecessarily restricting public use within adequate scientific basis.
- WILD HORSES AND BURROS—The proposed amendment would set appropriate management levels (AML’s) for wild horses and burros. Some people are concerned that the proposed AML’s are unnecessarily low, and many threaten the long-term survival of these species in southern Nevada by reducing genetic diversity.

- This concern includes the cumulative effects of other agencies’ actions in managing wild horse and burro herds.
- ELK AND OTHER WILDLIFE—The proposed amendment would set an AML for elk, and restrict introduction of new non-native species and augmentation of existing species. Some people believe that the proposed restrictions on wildlife habitat management will restrict wildlife populations far below levels that the ecosystem could support, and will limit the ability of Nevadans to view and hunt game and non-game wildlife.
- CONTROLLED BURNING—The proposed amendment would encourage controlled burning in some areas of the Spring Mountains under certain specific conditions. Some people are concerned that any deliberately set fires could escape and pose a risk to life and property. This concern also includes the effects of fire on vegetation, scenery, and wildlife.

### Preliminary Alternatives

The Forest Service will evaluate a wide range of alternatives to the proposed amendment to the Forest Plan, in response to issues identified in the scoping process. The agency expects to consider at least the following alternatives, which respond to preliminary issues identified to date. As new issues are identified through public involvement, new alternatives may be created, and existing alternatives modified. Some of these preliminary alternatives may not be analyzed in detail. The Responsible Official may select the original Proposed Amendment or any of the alternatives to it as the final management plan for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

- Alternative A—Continue to manage the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area under current management plans. Do not amend the Forest Plan. This is the “no action” alternative.
- Alternative B—Maximize protection of natural resources, heritage resources, and ecosystem health. When in doubt over effects, choose standards which will involve the least risk to rare species, natural ecological processes, and heritage resource sites, even if this involves closing many areas or activities to recreational use. Favor native species and natural processes, but use prescribed fire to mimic historic fire regime. Provide for little or no expansion of recreation opportunities. Close the Spring Mountains Wild Horse Territory, and

- place the horses for adoption or remove them to other territories.
- Alternative C—Within the capacity of the ecosystem, maximize opportunities for recreation (both developed and undeveloped) and customer service, including trails, roads, campgrounds, and other facilities. This alternative would still provide basic protection for threatened and endangered species, and would not permit activities which endanger the long-term health of the ecosystem. However, public uses would not be prohibited or restricted without hard scientific evidence that they are harmful.
- Alternative D—Maintain the same balance of protection and development as the Proposed Amendment, but provide for the maximum sustainable populations of wild horses and burros consistent with maintaining ecosystem health. Provide for water development and other habitat improvements, and favor wild horses over elk, other wildlife, and recreation development.
- Alternative E—Maintain the same balance of protection and development as the Proposed Amendment, but provide for the maximum sustainable diversity and productivity of wildlife habitat, especially for game animals, consistent with maintaining ecosystem health. Encourage introduction of new species which show the potential to naturalize, as appropriate. Provide for water development and other habitat improvements, and favor wildlife over wild horses and recreation development.
- Alternative F—Maintain the same balance of protection and development as the Proposed Amendment, but do not use controlled burns or allow natural fires to burn. Suppress all wildfires aggressively, and use only vegetative treatments to minimize risk to property from fire.

### Public Comments on the Draft EIS

After the Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been published, the Forest Service will again be actively seeking information, comments and assistance from Federal, State and local agencies and from individuals and organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time.

The DEIS and draft Forest Plan amendment should be available for public review by about November, 1995.

After a comment period of 90 days, the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Forest Plan amendment should be completed by September, 1996.

The comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will extend 90 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the "Notice of Availability" in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1973). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 90 day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Dated: March 17, 1995.

**R.M. "Jim" Nelson,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 95-7886 Filed 3-30-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

### **Environmental Impact Statement Helicopter Landings in Wilderness, Tongass National Forest, Alaska**

**AGENCY:** Forst Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Revised notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The original notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for helicopter landings in Wilderness, Tongass National Forest, Alaska was published in the August 31, 1994 **Federal Register** (pages 44964-44965).

The purpose of this revised notice is to clarify the scope of activities to be analyzed in the helicopter landings in wilderness EIS. The EIS will include all helicopter access for recreational purposes including tours, sightseeing, guiding and other commercial recreation purposes. The environmental consequences of helicopter landing for general public access will be addressed. If helicopter landings are approved within Tongass wildernesses, allocation of those landings between commercial visitor service providers and other members of the public would be made in a separate process.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Written comments concerning the revised proposed action to approve helicopter landing areas in Tongass National Forest wilderness should be received on or before May 1, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Bill Tremblay, Team Leader USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 309, Petersburg, AK 99833.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions concerning the environmental impact statement should be directed to Bill Tremblay, Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 309, Petersburg, AK 99833, phone: (907) 772-3841.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the project is to provide for use of helicopters for general public access where this use was established prior to designation of Wilderness while managing Tongass National Forest wilderness to provide high quality Wilderness opportunities. In this context, general public access is for activities such as hiking, camping, photography, fishing, skiing, sightseeing, guiding, and other Wilderness-oriented forms of recreation.

The Regional Forester, Phil Janik, will decide whether to allow helicopter landings for access in areas that were used prior to Wilderness designation. If helicopter landings are approved, the Regional Forester will decide which

areas will be designated and what restrictions, if any, will be established.

Issuance of the final environmental impact statement is projected in the spring of 1996. The Responsible official for the decision is Phil Janik, Regional Forester, Alaska Region, P.O. Box 21628, Juneau Alaska, 99802-1628.

Dated: March 22, 1995.

**Phil Janik,**

*Regional Forester.*

[FR Doc. 95-7888 Filed 3-30-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

### **Sequoia National Forest; California Spotted Owl DEIS**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces an open house in which the public is invited to participate in an information exchange regarding alternatives being considered in the California Spotted Owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement, as they affect the Sequoia National Forest area.

**DATES AND TIME:** April 11, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Springville Veterans Memorial Building, 35944 Highway 190, Springville, CA 93265.

#### **CONTACT PERSON FOR FURTHER**

**INFORMATION:** Judy Schutza, Hot Springs Ranger District, Route 4, Box 548, California Hot Springs, CA 93207, (805) 548-6503.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Forest Service has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to amend the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide Sierran Province Forest Plans with new management direction for the California Spotted Owl. The purpose of this meeting is to exchange information with the public regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the preferred alternative.

The meeting will be informally structured. A member of the team that prepared the DEIS will be available to answer questions and discuss the DEIS. Visual media depicting the alternatives and selected environmental consequences will be displayed.

March 27, 1995.

**Linda C. Brett,**

*Acting Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 95-7907 Filed 3-30-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M